UNITED STATES PATENT APPLICATION

of

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for

METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR A GAME OF CHANCE

TO THE COMMISSIONER OF PATENTS AND TRADEMARKS:

Your petitioner, **Gene Squitieri,** citizen of the United States, whose residence and postal mailing address is **1504 Breeze Canyon Dr., Las Vegas, NV 89117,** prays that letters patent may be granted to him/her as the inventor of a **METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR A GAME OF CHANCE** as set forth in the following specification.

METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR A GAME OF CHANCE

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates generally to a casino-type game of chance. More
particularly, the present invention relates to a game of chance played on a gaming surface, a
gaming machine and/or a computer.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

There are numerous casino betting games which call for players to make bets and win
money based on the odds which they overcome to win. Typically, these games focus on a
particular device and method. For example, roulette is a game in which a player places a bet on
a colored and numbered mark representative of a corresponding mark on a wheel. A ball is
rolled which eventually falls into a slot with a mark. If the player has selected the mark in
which the ball fell, the player wins. Rating this game by skill level teaches a player that
virtually no skill is required. The players must blindly place bets and watch the ball roll. There
is little opportunity for varying the odds against which the player must play. There is also only a
single phase of game play. Betting occurs, a ball is rolled and lands in a slot, and the play is
over.

A different well-known casino game of chance which uses a different device and method
is blackjack or twenty-one as it is also known. Blackjack is a game which only uses playing
cards. Unlike roulette, blackjack does require a certain amount of skill in an attempt to beat the
odds to win against the house.

One other well-known casino game of chance which is worth mentioning is craps. Craps
uses another different device, a pair of dice, which are rolled in an attempt to obtain certain
advantageous combinations of rolls. The player must attempt to get certain combinations of
rolls and the beat the odds against rolling them to win.

The aforementioned casino games of chance are related in that they all require a player to
beat the odds to win. They also require a player to use widely varying degrees of skill. If skill
level were the only factor in determining a good game of chance, the popularity of many
successful games of chance would be unexplainable. However, some other factors which must
be considered are the pace of the game, ease of play, attractiveness of layout, the involvement of
the players, the number of players, the playing devices used in the game, and the strategy which
a player can use in the game.

When approaching a new casino game of chance, a player is likely to consider all of the

factors above when deciding whether to play. However, another factor affecting a player's decision is the degree of familiarity. In other words, if the game is too different, even if uncomplicated, a player may decide to move on to something that is either well-known, or at least not too far removed in method of play from other games.

5   U.S. Patent No. 6,070,872, to the inventor of the present invention, discloses a method of playing a game of chance. In this game of chance, there is disclosed a custom-made die and a custom-made deck of playing cards. However, the custom-made deck of playing cards results in a reduced familiarity and comfort level for the players to understand their chances in being successful in the game. In addition, for first time players attempting this game of chance, there

10   is a degree of complication that may cause hesitancy to begin and continue playing this game. As such, due to the hesitancy and un-familiarity issues, a player likely will be naturally deterred from wagering aggressively in this game.

        Therefore, it would be an advantage to create a casino game of chance which uses familiar playing cards and employs uncomplicated game play, yet still provides a new game

15   structure which will pique players' curiosity and keep them at the table once playing the game.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

        The present invention relates to a method and apparatus for conducting a casino-type game of chance. The method of conducting the game includes placing at least three unexposed

20   cards from a playing card deck on at least three designated areas of a playing surface with one card on each of the at least three designated areas. A player is provided an opportunity to make at least one first wager in at least one of a first wager area and a second wager area. The first wager area identifies card content based on possible wagers for numerical value combinations corresponding to at least two cards to be revealed of the at least three unexposed cards. The

25   second wager area identifies card content dependent upon at least one face card revealed in the at least two cards to be revealed. The at least two cards of the at least three unexposed cards are then revealed and any winning wager of the at least one first wager made by the player is then paid according to the combination of the at least two cards exposed.

        Additional features and advantages of the invention will be apparent from the detailed

30   description which follows, taken in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, which together illustrate, by way of example, features of the invention.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

While the specification concludes with claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming that which is regarded as the present invention, the advantages of this invention may be ascertained from the following description of the invention when read in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

FIG. 1 illustrates a top view of a gaming table, depicting a game layout on a gaming surface for playing a game of chance, according to an embodiment of the present invention;

FIGS. 2(a) through 2(f) illustrate six top views of a single custom-made die for playing the game, depicting each of the faces of the die, according to an embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 3 illustrates an enlarged view of the game layout on the gaming surface, according to an embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 4 illustrates a block diagram, in flow chart form, of a sequence of playing the game of chance, according to an embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 5 illustrates a continuation of the block diagram depicted in FIG. 4, according to an embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 6 illustrates a schematic diagram of a gaming machine for playing the game of chance, according to an embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. 7 illustrates an enlarged view of a game layout displayed on a display device of the gaming machine, according to an embodiment of the present invention; and

FIG. 8 illustrates a schematic diagram of a computer system for playing the game of chance with an Internet connection, according to an embodiment of the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Reference will now be made to the exemplary embodiments illustrated in the drawings, and specific language will be used herein to describe the same. It will nevertheless be understood that no limitation of the scope of the invention is thereby intended. Alterations and further modifications of the inventive features illustrated herein, and additional applications of the principles of the inventions as illustrated herein, which would occur to one skilled in the relevant art and having possession of this disclosure, are to be considered within the scope of the invention.

FIG. 1 illustrates an embodiment by which a casino-type game of chance 100 can be played in, for example, a casino on a gaming table 102. The gaming table 102 can include a

gaming surface 104, a chips holder 106, a card shuffler 108 and a card shoe 110 and any other suitable gaming components common in casino-type games. The gaming surface 104 can include a game layout 120 with various primary wagering areas and, specifically, a first wager area 130, a second wager area 140 and a third wager area 150. In addition, the game layout 120

5 can include three designated card-placement areas 122 for placing three cards. In one embodiment, the casino-type game of chance can be played with a conventional card deck 112 of playing cards and a custom-made die 114. As known in the art, a conventional deck of playing cards includes fifty-two cards with four suits (i.e., spades, diamonds, hearts and clubs), with each suit displaying card values of Ace, Two, Three, Four, Five, Six, Seven, Eight, Nine,

10 Ten, Jack, Queen and King.

With respect to FIGS 2(a) through 2(f), the custom-made die 114 can be a cubic shaped six sided die. The die 114 can include a total of three different numbers, symbols or symbols representing numbers, with each side of the die exhibiting two of the three different numbers. As such, each side of the die 114 can be configured to include one of three possible number

15 groupings. The possible number groupings are (1 and 2), (1 and 3) and (2 and 3). Therefore, if the die is six sided and there are three possible number groupings, then each of the number groupings can be repeated once on the die. Specifically, as depicted in FIGS. 2(a) and 2(b), the number combinations for two sides of the die are (1 and 2). Likewise, FIGS. 2(c) and 2(d) illustrate two sides of the die having number combinations of (1 and 3) and FIGS. 2(e) and 2(f)

20 depict two sides of the die with number combinations of (2 and 3). In one embodiment, each like number grouping can appear on opposite faces of the die 114.

FIG. 3 illustrates an enlarged view of the game layout 120 of the first, second and third wager areas 130, 140 and 150 and the three designated card-placement areas 122. Each of the three designated card-placement areas 122 can be marked with a different number 124 or

25 symbol, such as 1, 2 and 3. These numbers or symbols correspond to the numbers or symbols marked on each side of the die 114 (FIG 2). The three designated card-placement areas 122 can be presented in the game layout 120 to receive three cards 126 can be randomly drawn from the shuffled card deck 112 (FIG. 1). The three cards 126 can be initially placed, face-down and unexposed, with one in each of the three designated card-placement areas 122. As the game

30 progresses, two cards in two of the three designated card-placement areas 122 can be revealed after making wagers in at least one of the first and second wager areas 130 and 140, wagering on various card values and combinations thereof of the first two cards to be revealed. A player can also wager on the value of the last card in the three designated card-placement areas to be revealed by wagering in the third wager area 150. A winning wager is paid to the player based

on a payout ratio 128, depicted in the game layout 120 adjacent potential wagering values that can be wagered upon within the first, second and third wager areas 130, 140 and 150.

Referring now to the first wager area 130, this wager area can include two types of wagering arrangements for wagering on content of the first two cards to be revealed of the three cards 126 placed in the designated areas 122. The first wager area 130 can identify content based on possible wagers for numerical value combinations corresponding to the first two cards to be revealed. The two types of wagering arrangements in the first wager area depicted in the game layout 120 can include: (1) a numerical sum section 132 based on the first two cards to be revealed; and (2) a numerical pair section 134 based on the first two cards to be revealed. The numerical sum section 132 can depict sum values 136 of two through ten and sum values of twelve through twenty. These sum values 136 identify and represent potential wagers that can be placed thereon based on the sum of the number values given for the first two cards to be revealed.

The number values given for each card are as follows: Ace=1, 2=2, 3=3, 4=4, 5=5, 6=6, 7=7, 8=8, 9=9, 10=10, Jack=10, Queen=10 and King=10. As such, there can be only one combination of the first two cards with the sum value 136 equal to "two", (i.e., A, A). Likewise, there are multiple combinations of the first two cards to be revealed with the sum value 136 equal to each of the sum values 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20. By way of example, the various card combinations for the first two cards with the sum value 136 equal to "sixteen" are as follows: (8, 8); (7, 9); (6, 10); (6, Jack); (6, Queen); and (6, King). Further, in one embodiment, the sum value of "eleven" is not found in the numerical sum section 132. As such, according to this embodiment, if the first two cards reveal the sum value 136 of "eleven", then any wagers made in the first wager area 130 are lost by the player and go to the House of Casino. On the other hand, if a player wins in the numerical sum section 132, any winning wager is paid to the player based on the payout ratio 128 indicated below each sum value 136 in the numerical sum section 132. The payout ratio 128 can change based on the statistical probability of a particular sum value occurring. Further, the House can modify such payout ratio 128 as desired or stipulated by law.

As previously set forth, the numerical pair section 134 is illustrated in the first wager area 130. The numerical pair section 134 can identify content based on potential combinations of card pairs corresponding to the first two cards to be revealed including card pairs with card values Ace through ten. Specifically, a winning combination of the first two cards revealed can include the following: (Ace, Ace); (2, 2); (3, 3); (4, 4); (5, 5); (6, 6); (7, 7); (8, 8); (9, 9) and (10, 10). Further, in one embodiment, a player need only place one wager in the numerical pair

section 134 which can be a winning wager if any pair of the card values A through 10 is revealed in the first two cards. As depicted, the payout ratio 128 is the same for winning on any one of the card pairs since the statistical probability for obtaining any one of the pairs is the same. However, for promotional purposes, the payout ratio 128 can be different for a selective card pair or pairs as desired by, for example, increasing the payout ratio for selective card pairs.

Turning now to the second wager area 140 in the game layout 120, this wager area can be directed to and identify content of various face card combinations 142. The player is given an opportunity to wager on the second wager area 140 during the same time period for wagering in the first wager area 130. The second wager area 140 can identify content based on possible wagers corresponding to possible face card combinations 142 potentially found in the first two cards to be revealed and/or all three cards 126 to be revealed. Specifically, a winning wager in the second wager area 140 can include a face card combination 142 of at least one of the following: King-Queen-Jack (same suit); King-King-King, Queen-Queen-Queen, Jack-Jack-Jack; King-Queen-Jack (different suit); and King-King, Queen-Queen, Jack-Jack. As indicated, the payout ratio 128 can be different for the various face card combinations 142 based on the statistical probability of success of the various face card combinations being revealed within the three cards 126.

The player can place one wager in a wager section 144 of the second wager area 140, which wager can be directed to any of the above-referenced face card combinations 142. According to one embodiment, if a player places a wager in the second wager area 140 and if one of the first two cards revealed include a face card (i.e., King, Queen or Jack), then the wager placed in the second wager area 140 remains alive until the last card is revealed. The second wager area remaining alive in such situations provides a promotional aspect to the game in promoting the player to make further wagers in the third wager area 150. Further, the player can win twice, once if the first two cards reveal any one of King-King, Queen-Queen, Jack-Jack, after which, the wager remains alive for the player to win again if the last card, combined with the first two cards revealed, provides one of the above-referenced winning face card combinations 142, namely, King-King-King, Queen-Queen-Queen, Jack-Jack-Jack.

The third wager area 150 can be directed to wagering on the last remaining unexposed card of the three cards 126. As depicted, the third wager area 150 in the game layout 120 identifies content of possible wagers corresponding to the last remaining unexposed card. Possible wagers identified in the third wager area 150 can include card values 152 of Ace through King. As such, a player is provided an opportunity to place one or more wagers in the third wager area 150 on the specific card values 152 of Ace through King. Wagering in the third

wager area 150 can be employed during a second wager time period after the first two cards have been revealed. In this manner, the player can make informed decisions, based on the first two cards already revealed, as to which card values 152, if any, to wager upon in the third wager area 150.

5   FIGS. 4 and 5 depict a method, in flow chart form, for playing the game of chance according to an embodiment of the present invention. With reference to FIGS. 1, 2(a-f), 3, 4 and 5, a dealer can provide a shuffled conventional card deck 112 of playing cards, as indicated in block 202. The dealer can then draw three cards 126 from the card deck 112 and place the three cards 126, face-down and unexposed, on the gaming surface 104 with each card in one of the three designated card-placement areas 122, as indicated in block 204. As previously set forth, the three designated card-placement areas 122 can be separately marked with a different number or symbol 124, such as 1, 2 and 3.

As indicated in block 206, the dealer can then provide an opportunity to the player to make one or more wagers in the first wager area 130 and/or the second wager area 140. The player can then place wagers in the first wager area or the second wager area or both, as indicated in block 208. Once the player has been give sufficient opportunity to make one or more wagers in the first and second wager areas 130 and 140, the dealer can confirm that all wagers are in and that the wagering is closed. As previously set forth in detail, wagers placed in the first wager area can be based on wagering on content of the first two cards to be revealed and, specifically, the sum values of the first two cards in a numerical sum section 132 and the card values of the first two cards in a numerical pair section 134. Further, as previously set forth, wagers placed in the second wager area 140 can be based on face card combinations 142 of either the first two cards revealed and/or all three cards revealed.

As indicated in block 210, determining which two of the three cards 126 in the three designated card-placement areas 122 will be revealed can be employed by rolling a custom die 114. Such a custom die 114 can include two independent symbols on each face with each symbol corresponding to one of the symbols 124 for each of the designated areas 122. As such, the player or the dealer can roll the die 114. The two independent symbols turned face-up on the die 114 determines which of the two cards will be revealed in the corresponding number or symbols 124 in the three designated card-placement areas.

As indicated in block 212, the two cards, determined from the die roll, can then be revealed. For example, if the rolled die reveals the number grouping (1 and 3), then the two cards placed in the designated card-placement areas 122 marked with a one and three are turned over to reveal the respective two card values.

At this juncture, once the first two cards are revealed, a player continues with game play based on whether the player wagered in the first wager area 130, as indicated in game decision block 213. If the player did not wager in the first wager area 130, the player continues to game decision block 220 discussed in further detail hereafter. If the player did wager in the first wager area 130, then the player continues to game decision block 214. As indicated in game decision block 214, the question is posed whether the sum value of the first two cards revealed equals eleven. If the sum of the card values revealed equal eleven, then any wagers made in the first wager area 130 go to the House, as indicated in block 216. The player then continues to game decision block 220. On the other hand, if the sum of the first two cards revealed does not equal eleven, then any winning wager placed in the first wager area 130 is paid to the player, as indicated in block 218. Such winnings are based on the payout ratio 128 as indicated for the various identified wagering content values for the numerical value section 132 and the numerical pair section 134 for the particular wager(s) placed in the first wager area 130. Obviously, any non-winning wagers made in the first wager area 130 would go to the House.

At this juncture, the player then continues to game decision block 220, where the question is posed whether the player placed a wager in the second wager area 140. As previously set forth, the player can directly arrive to game decision block 220 from game decision block 213 or block 216. If the player did not place a wager in the second wager area, then the player directly proceeds to block 226, discussed in further detail hereafter. On the other hand, if the player did place a wager in the second wager area 140, then the player continues to game decision block 222. As indicated in game decision block 222, the question is posed whether there was a face card (i.e., King, Queen and/or Jack) within the first two cards previously revealed. On one hand, if there was not a face card in the first two cards revealed, then the player looses the wager in the second wager area 140 and continues to block 226. On the other hand, if a face card was revealed in the first two cards, then game play proceeds to game decision block 223, where the question is posed whether there was a winning face card combination 142 in the first two cards revealed. If there was not a winning face card combination 142, then the wager made in the second wager area 140 remains alive until the last card is revealed, as indicated in block 224, after which, the player proceeds to block 226. If, on the other hand, there was a winning face card combination 142 in the first two cards revealed, then any winnings are paid to the player based on the payout ratio 128 of the face card combination 142, as indicated in block 225. Game play then continues to block 224, indicating that the wager made in the second wager area 140 remains alive until the last card is revealed, after which, game play proceeds to block 226.

At this juncture, the player is then given an opportunity to place at least one wager in a third wager area, as indicated in block 226. The player can arrive to block 226, from game decision blocks 220, 223 and block 224. The player can then choose whether to place one or more wagers in the third wager area 150, as indicated in player decision block 228.

5   If the player does not wish to place a wager in the third wager area 150, then the player proceeds to game decision block 230, wherein the question is posed whether the player wagered in the second wager area 140 and whether there was a face card in the first two cards revealed. If not, then game play for the player for this round of the game is over. If the player did wager in the second wager area and there was a face card revealed in the first two cards, then the player

10   proceeds to block 234. On the other hand, as indicated in player decision block 228, if the player wishes to place a wager in the third wager area 150, then the player can place one or more wagers in the third wager area 150, as indicated in block 232. Any wagers made in the third wager area are made after the first two cards are revealed during a second wagering time period. As such, the player can make wagers in the third wager area 150 based on an educated guess

15   since the player will know the card values of the first two cards. The wagers made in the third wager area 150 are possible wagers made on the value of the remaining last unexposed card. As previously set forth, these one or more wagers can be placed on the third wager area 150 on any one of the spaces identifying a card value 152 of Ace through King.

       Once the dealer announces all bets in, wagering closed, then the remaining unexposed

20   card is revealed, as indicated in block 234. The player can arrive at block 234 from block 232 and game decision block 230. As indicated in block 234, once the last remaining card is revealed, then any winning wagers made in the third wager area 150 are paid to the player according to the payout ratio 128. Further, if the wager made in the second wager area 140 remained alive, then any winning wagers made in the second wager area 140 are paid to the

25   player according to the payout ratio 128. At this time, game play for the player for this round of the game is over and a new shuffled deck of cards can be provided to play the game of chance again, as previously described. As can be well appreciated by one of ordinary skill in the art, game play of the present invention can be implemented for a single player at a game table 102 as well as multiple players playing the game simultaneously at the game table 102.

30   Turning to FIG. 6, in another embodiment, the game of chance can be played on a gaming device 300. The gaming device 300 can include a gaming terminal 302 operated with a central processing unit 304 ("CPU") disposed in the gaming terminal 302. The gaming device can also include a display device 306 coupled to a graphics processing unit 308 ("GPU"), an input device 310, a wager acceptor 312, a coin/credit output 313 and memory 314 having

gaming software 315 saved thereon, each of which can be coupled to the CPU 304. The CPU 304 and the GPU 308 can be configured to operate and implement the gaming software 315 with the display device 306 in conjunction with the various components of the gaming terminal 302 for a player to play the game of chance of the present invention. The gaming software 315 can

5   be integrated with any known suitable computer usable medium having a computer readable program code embodied therein for playing a game of chance as known by one of ordinary skill in the art. In addition, in one embodiment, the GPU 308 can be integrated with the CPU 304 as a single integrated component. Furthermore, the gaming device 300 can be configured to include the CPU 304 coupled to a network card 316 and/or a central controller 318 for

10   controlling other gaming terminals G1, G2, G3,...GN.

With reference to FIGS. 6 and 7, a player can play the game of chance on the gaming terminal 302 and view a game layout 320 displayed on the display device 306. The game layout 320 can include a first wager area 330, a second wager area 340 and a third wager area 350 as well as three designated areas 322 for displaying three card indicia 326, in which game play can

15   be conducted similar to that of the previous embodiment. The player can insert money, tokens or a credit card into the wager acceptor 312 at any suitable amount which can be displayed on the display device 306 or on a separate display. The gaming software 315 can then be prompted through the input device 310 by a player, or automatically, to facilitate game play for the player by displaying three unexposed card indicia 326 in the corresponding three designated areas 322

20   in the game layout 320. The three unexposed card indicia 326 can be randomly selected and generated through the CPU 304 via the gaming software 315 from the card values of a conventional playing card deck.

Similar to the previous embodiment, the player can then be given an opportunity to place one or more wagers in a first wager area 330 and/or a second wager area 340 displayed in the

25   game layout 320. Placing wagers can be employed with the input device 310, such as with input buttons and/or directly to the display device 306 employing a touch-sensitive screen. The wager amounts can vary for selected wagers and can be controlled by the player. The particular content the player chooses to wager upon can be indicated with highlighting indicia 360 or by any other suitable form of indicating or confirming a particular wager made. In one

30   embodiment, a wager window 362 can be provided to display the specific amount the player is wagering. This wager amount can be increased and lowered as desired by the user through the input device 310 as well as be eliminated in the case that the player desires to change or remove a particular wager.

Once the wagering in the first and/or second wager areas 330 and 340 is completed, two of the three unexposed card indicia 326 can be revealed. This can be employed by either the player choosing which two of the three card indicia 326 are revealed via the input device 310. In another embodiment, the CPU 304 can randomly select which two of the three card indicia

5   326 are revealed. This random selection can be employed with a window opening to display a custom made die being rolled to show which two of the three card indicia will be revealed, similar to the die roll in the previous embodiment. In another embodiment, the card indicia 326 revealed can be pre-determined or fixed, such as the first two card indicia, from left to right. As can be appreciated and known by one of ordinary skill in the art, the remaining game play on the

10   gaming terminal 302 can continue similar to that of the previous embodiment, as described with respect to FIGS. 1-5, taking into consideration the implementation of game play on a gaming terminal 302.

With respect to FIG. 6, in another embodiment, the game of chance of the present invention can be played on a computer system 400 coupled to a server/router 416 and the

15   Internet 418. The computer system 400 can include a computer 402 operated with a central processing unit 404 ("CPU") disposed in the computer 402. The computer system 400 can also include a display device 406 coupled to a graphics processing unit 408 ("GPU"), an input device 410, a network card 412 and memory 414 having gaming software 415 saved thereon, each of which can be coupled to the CPU. The CPU 404 and the GPU 408 can be configured to operate

20   and implement the gaming software 415 to be displayed on the display device 406 in conjunction with the various components of the computer system 400 for a player to play the game of chance of the present invention. Further, in this embodiment, wagers can be accepted in the form of a credit card or any other suitable method known in the art. Game play can be conducted similar to the previous embodiment, except the input device 410 can be in the form of

25   a mouse or pointer device or any other suitable input device known in the art. Further, the server/router 416 can be coupled to multiple computers C1, C2, C3,...CN for additional players to play the game of chance at remote locations.

It is to be understood that the above-referenced arrangements are only illustrative of the application for the principles of the present invention. Numerous modifications and alternative

30   arrangements can be devised without departing from the spirit and scope of the present invention while the present invention has been shown in the drawings and fully described above with particularity and detail in connection with what is presently deemed to be the most practical and preferred embodiments(s) of the invention, it will be apparent to those of ordinary skill in the art

that numerous modifications can be made without departing from the principles and concepts of the invention as set forth in the claims.